

LET'S Talk

SUMMER 2005

HEALTHY BODIES • SOUND MINDS • A SAFE PLACE TO WORK

ANNOUNCING A NEW SERVICE — Connect4Health

SOMETIMES, PEOPLE FIND THEMSELVES WONDERING whether their use of alcohol and/or drugs is an issue of misuse or abuse, but they don't know where to turn. Federal Occupational Health (FOH) can help. Now, there is a new and innovative resource that offers another option for employees with alcohol- and drug-related concerns.

This new resource, Connect4Health, is a technologically sophisticated program that offers Web-based education (up to six sessions), online support, and early intervention and relapse prevention. Connect4Health is offered in addition to the customary EAP sessions, and is available to all Federal employees and family members covered by the FOH EAP.

All Connect4Health sessions consist of online group discussions about issues relating to alcohol and drug use. Sessions are facilitated by licensed professional counselors and utilize real-time audio and video technology that lets participants see the counselor in an atmosphere of complete confidentiality and anonymity. Connect4Health is *not* a substance-abuse treatment program.

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Stress Can Make Your Body Say 'Uncle'

IN MODERATE DOSES, STRESS CHALLENGES YOU TO DO YOUR BEST so you keep learning and growing. But too much stress has a negative effect on your work, mood and physical well-being.

When stress becomes chronic, it can cause mental and physical distress.

Stress causes your body to create chemicals that send extra power to muscles and help you focus your mind and senses. When stress is occasional, these chemicals are washed away safely in your blood. But when stress continues over time, the chemicals build up in your body. This can cause physical symptoms such as:

- **CHRONIC COLDS AND FLU.** Stress weakens your immune system.

- **INSOMNIA.** Your body gives you another shot of adrenaline every time you think about your problems.

- **HEADACHES AND SORE MUSCLES.** Stress puts your body in a high state of alert, with muscles tensed to fight back. Constant tension makes them rigid and sore.



- **STOMACH PROBLEMS.** Stress prompts stomach secretions that can cause digestive miseries.

- **SKIN ERUPTIONS.** A depressed immune system can cause fever blisters, cold sores, shingles and other skin problems.

Physical symptoms of stress can get worse if the stress continues to build. This can lead to even more serious conditions such as heart disease, depression, alcoholism and cancer.

ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

There is information and a full article on advance directives on the FOH Web site, www.foh.dhhs.gov. Just go to the home page, log in and click on "News You Can Use."

what's new

Late-Breaking Health News

>>Exercise alone can reduce depression. The first study to look at exercise alone in treating mild to moderate depression showed depressive symptoms were reduced almost 50 percent in adults who did 30 minutes of aerobic exercise three to five times a week.

The four-year study of 80 people published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* found those who participated in moderately intense aerobics, such as exercising on a treadmill or stationary bicycle — whether it was for three, four or five days a week — experienced a decline in depressive symptoms by an average of 47 percent after 12 weeks.

>>Children exposed to secondhand smoke daily have 3.6 times the risk of developing lung cancer later in life as those who grow up in smoke-free homes. Children who breathe secondhand smoke a few times a week are 1.5 times more likely to develop lung cancer, according to a study published in the *British Medical Journal*. In one of the most comprehensive studies of its kind on passive smoking, researchers looked at 303,020 people who had never smoked, or who had stopped smoking for at least 10 years.



>> Losing even a little weight helps a lot. According to a report published in the *Mayo Clinic Health Letter*, losing just 5 to 10 percent of your body weight and keeping it off can increase longevity and help reduce your risk for these conditions:

- **HYPERTENSION** — several studies have shown losing even 5 percent of body weight can reduce or eliminate the need for medications to lower blood pressure.
- **DIABETES** — studies of people at high risk for diabetes showed moderate weight loss from dietary changes and exercise can delay and possibly prevent type 2 diabetes. A weight loss of 5 to 7 percent was linked to a 58 percent reduced risk for diabetes.
- **HEART DISEASE** — a 10 percent weight reduction may reduce your lifetime risk of developing heart disease by up to 4 percent.
- **STROKE** — sustained moderate weight loss may reduce the risk for stroke.
- **SLEEP APNEA** — one study compared the likelihood of this sleep disorder in overweight participants before and after weight loss. Those who lost a moderate amount of weight experienced a 14 to 26 percent decline in the number of occurrences of abnormal overnight breathing.

VITALITY-ON-DEMAND

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TRYING TO CHANGE?

LIST YOUR VALUES

LIKE MANY PEOPLE, YOU MAY FEEL FRUSTRATED TRYING TO CHANGE A BAD HABIT. Sometimes people fail because they focus on the wrong reasons for changing.

Perhaps you've tried to get regular exercise but can never stick with it. It may be that your motivation to exercise is what's tripping you up. Maybe it's time to step back and reconsider your reasons for wanting to change.

Perhaps you are focused on exercising mainly as a way to lose weight. While this isn't a bad reason for changing, it may not be motivating enough to help you stick with it.

Instead, think about how getting regular exercise ties in with what you value most in life. Write down your list of values. It might include your family, your health and longevity and your self-esteem. Now focus on how exercise will help support those values. Exercise can help you live a longer life by lowering your risk for certain diseases. This means you'll be more likely to be around for your family for years to come.

Thinking about exercise — or any new healthy habit — in relation to your values may give you the motivation to stick with it. To help you stay on track, post your list of values where you'll see it every day. There may be no better motivator.



Remember to Relax on Your Vacation

TOO MANY OF US RETURN FROM VACATION MORE TIRED AND STRESSED OUT THAN WHEN WE LEFT. But with the right planning, your vacation can actually leave you feeling rested and recharged.

Whether you're traveling around the world, across country, to the mountains or the beach, here are some suggestions for enjoying a stress-free vacation:

- **IF YOU HAVE TO CATCH UP WITH EXTRA WORK** before starting your vacation, spread it out.
- **BEGIN PACKING A WEEK BEFORE YOUR TRIP.** Waiting until the last minute is stressful.
- **VISITING FAMILY, WHILE IMPORTANT, OFTEN IS NOT RELAXING.** Plan to spend at least part of your vacation in a more relaxing setting.
- **PLAN TO GET A FULL NIGHT'S SLEEP EVERY NIGHT.**
- **AVOID WORKING WHILE ON VACATION.** Don't leave contact information with the office, and, if possible, leave your laptop at home.
- **CHOOSE A VACATION THAT ADDS BALANCE TO YOUR LIFE.** If life is hectic, get away and relax. If life is lethargic, consider a more active vacation.



KEEP THE KIDS HAPPY

Here are some tips to keep your children occupied on a long car trip:

- Pack healthy snacks and beverages.
- Bring small toys, books, games and cassettes.
- Mark your trip's starting point and destination on a map and point out landmarks along the way so they can follow your progress.
- See how many different states' license plates you can spot.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder — IT'S NOT JUST KID STUFF

ARE YOU RESTLESS? MESSY? EASILY DISTRACTED? These could be symptoms of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), more commonly referred to as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).

According to the Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA), 3 to 5 percent of school-aged children have ADHD, and one-half to one-third of children with the disorder will continue to experience problems as adults, which can include:

- Being unable to keep a job or not keeping jobs as long
- Not achieving educational goals otherwise within their ability
- Having marital difficulties
- Having more accidents and traffic violations

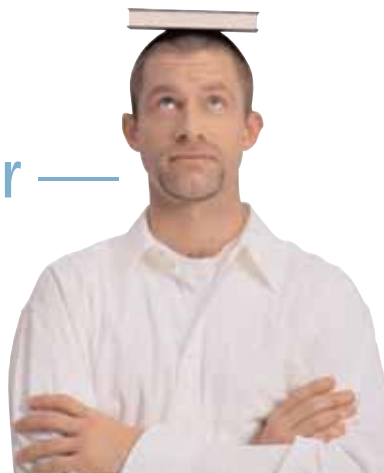
In diagnosing ADHD in adults, symptoms are traced all the way back to childhood. Symptoms of inattentive behavior include having a short attention span, being easily distracted and being disorganized. Over-activity and being impulsive — acting and/or doing things without considering

the consequences — characterize hyperactive behavior.

These symptoms have to have been present in childhood for there to be a diagnosis retrospectively in adults. Moreover, the problems caused by ADHD would be pervasive and get in the way of the child's normal development — usually academic or social.

The typical first line of treatment is medication. But no one treatment approach is appropriate for everyone. Treatment must be tailored to the individual, depending on his or her behavioral, social, academic, vocational or relationship concerns.

For more information about ADD in adults, visit the Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA) Web site at www.add.org or the Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) Web site at www.chadd.org.



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The Connect4Health program can benefit adults ...

- With substance-misuse vulnerabilities
- Who want more education on their use of substances and their effects
- Looking for relapse prevention support
- Who cannot participate in single-location substance education groups due to work or personal reasons
- Who live in rural or remote U.S. locations without proximity to face-to-face services
- Who are posted overseas without access to services
- Who simply desire the convenience and confidentiality of online services

Connect4Health was designed especially for FOH by eGetgoing, a fully accredited online substance use intervention program. Setting up the Connect4Health program is easy. You must have a computer with a modem or other Internet connection; access to a quiet, private room; and Windows 98SE/ME/2000/XP operating system. You will receive a kit including set-up and content CDs, a headset and microphone. An eGetgoing IT specialist will personally help you install and test the software to ensure you can log in successfully and can see and hear properly.

FOH **FEDERAL OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH**
a component of the US Public Health Service
Program Support Center
Department of Health and Human Services

The Federal Consortium EAP provides assessment, counseling, referral, training and consultation to federal employees and agencies throughout the United States.